

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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CONTACT: Mark Bayer

or David Moulton

(202) 225-2836

SAFETY AGENCY TELLS LAWMAKERS IT WILL COMMUNICATE CAUSE OF SHREWSBURY ACCIDENT NATIONWIDE

Investigation of fatality at church fair continues

Washington DC: Reps. Edward Markey (D-MA), Jim McGovern (D-MA) and Richard Neal (D-MA) today released a letter from Hal Stratton, the chairman of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) assuring the three Massachusetts lawmakers that the nation's premier product safety agency had joined the state investigation of the recent amusement ride fatality in Shrewsbury. The congressmen had urged CPSC's involvement in a letter on September 20, 2004

(http://www.house.gov/markey/Issues/iss_amusement_ltr040920.pdf).

"Every time one of these tragedies occurs," said Markey "we owe it to the families to investigate aggressively, determine what happened, and ensure that every church fair in every county in every state of the union knows that it is time to stop the ride and check the bolts. The industry prefers lax loophole-ridden regulations, which guarantees more tragedies in the future. We need to tighten up, and we need to do it now."

"I am grateful for the rapid response of the CPSC and am hopeful that their investigation will yield both answers and accountability for this needless tragedy. The victims and their families deserve nothing less," said Rep. Jim McGovern.

"With literally hundreds of thousands of people across the country visiting carnivals and fairs each year, we need to be certain that these mobile amusement rides are safe," said Congressman Neal. "And in the event of an accident, the owners and operators of these rides need to be held accountable. That is why I welcome the letter of the Chairman of the CPSC. An investigation by the CPSC into the tragic events in Shrewsbury is a appropriate response in our effort to help prevent accidents from happening again in the future."

In today's letter, the CPSC noted that "when the cause of the failure is determined, the CPSC's Office of Compliance will initiate appropriate action as warranted. Additionally, CPSC will immediately communicate our findings to manufacturers and operators, as well as state and local safety officials across the country."

The CPSC still lacks authority, however, to investigate the cause of fatalities at permanent parks. In April, for example, a man was killed while riding on the Superman - Ride of Steel mega coaster at Six Flags New England in Agawam, Mass. Rep. Markey has proposed legislation at the federal level -- the National Amusement Park Ride Safety Act -- to close this so-called "roller coaster loophole."

For a complete copy of the letter from the CPSC and for more information on this issue, visit www.house.gov/Markey.

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